



CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, DUMONT NJ

Safe Sanctuaries Policy: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in our Church

***THIS VERSION OF THE POLICY IS FOR ALL GROUPS WHO
USE CALVARY UMC'S BUILDING – SHORT AND LONG TERM***

A. SUMMARY OF THE POLICY AT CALVARY UMC

1. All individuals who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults as part of your organization's single event or ongoing activity held at Calvary UMC shall have current background checks on file with your organization unless the adult is a parent or legal guardian of the child or youth. We will ask for a signed document as part of your building use agreement, verifying that you have these documents on file.
2. Your organization will follow the "Two Adult Rule" at all times. ALL one-adult-one child situations such as closed door bathroom breaks will be avoided whenever possible. Doors to areas that you are using must remain open as possible.
3. When two adults cannot be present, you must designate a third adult as a floater or you must place the children in the main area of the building where your group is located. IF the children present during the activity are being supervised by their own parent or legal guardian, then they may be left with just one parent.
4. Your organization must follow the "Five-Years-Older" Rule in that adults shall be at least 5 years older than the oldest youth. E.g., if the youngest youth is 12 years old then the youngest person watching them would be 17 years old
5. Your organization must be aware of and follow any custody and restraining orders for children / youth in participating in your programs / activities held at Calvary UMC.
6. The parents of children and youth must receive advance notice about program activities and leadership related to your use of the church building.
7. All computers you bring onto church property must be shall be password protected and Internet use closely monitored so that the children / youth cannot go to unacceptable sites.
8. We will provide an update annually of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and accepted procedures which we expect you to communicate to your volunteers / staff / parents.
9. We will provide educational materials about abuse and the Safe Sanctuaries Policy on an annual basis which we expect you to make available to your volunteers / staff / parents.
10. First Aid / CPR trained personnel will be available as often as possible and emergency numbers and procedures shall be posted throughout the church building.

B. REQUIREMENTS AND BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR STAFF / VOLUNTEERS

Screening and background checks shall be required of all persons involved in your organization's programs and activities with children / youth unless a more stringent check is required to satisfy the standards of a licensing agency. The background check needs to review these areas of information:

- Social Security Check: Helps to verify that the name and social security number match.
- BroadScreen Criminal and Sex Offender Search : Accesses criminal conviction, sexual offender registry, US Secret Service, Drug Enforcement Administration, etc. across the United States. (Includes available counties in all 50 states plus Washington, D.C.)
- Motor Vehicle Report: provides driving history currently on file with the DMV.
(Required only for those transporting children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.)

ADDENDUM TO THE SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY OF THE CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Summary of Issues:

Because the tragedy of abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults is a reality in our world, and because we recognize our responsibility to ensure a safe and protected environment for our children, The Greater New Jersey Annual Conference (GNJAC) of the United Methodist Church and CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH has developed a policy and associated guidelines to reduce the risk of abuse of children and youth in our church.

CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH and this policy attempts to prayerfully and faithfully identify areas of risk and take steps to reduce that risk. This policy is in compliance with the Greater NJ Conference Safe Sanctuaries Policy, approved June 2005. This policy and the guidelines herein are to be followed by all persons, ministries and programs dealing with children, youth (under age 18) and vulnerable adults.

Scope of the Problem:

We are called to move beyond grieving about child / vulnerable adult abuse to active efforts to eliminate the possibility of child abuse everywhere, and most especially in our churches.

Types of Child Abuse: Physical (battery, shaking, kicking, choking, "non-accidental"), Emotional (spoken or unspoken violence or cruelty), Neglect (endangers child's safety, health, and welfare), Sexual (fondling, intercourse, incest, exploitation and/or exposure to pornography or prostitution), Ritual (regularly and intentionally inflicted. possibly done with an appeal to a higher power).

It can Happen Anywhere: The child victim is never responsible for causing the abuse, and is never to be blamed. The child victim is never capable of consent to abusive behavior. Child sexual abuse is ALWAYS wrong and is solely the responsibility of the abuser.

Knowing the Facts: Studies have estimated that 1 out of 3 girls are sexually abused before the age of 18. Estimates state that 1 out of 7 boys are sexually abused, but the actual number may be higher because of a reluctance to report occurrences.

The Church at Risk The risk for churches is especially high because we're seen as "trusting organizations" and we've been "notoriously INACTIVE when it comes to screening volunteers and/or employees who work with kids." Furthermore, churches routinely provide opportunities for close contact with children.

Indicators of Child Abuse: Children showing anxiety about coming to church or being left in a class or program, or reluctance to participate when he/she had previously been enthusiastic may be an indicator of abusive behaviors. Abused children may have fears of specific individuals experience nightmares, or show hostility.

Abusers: Who Are They?: Less than 20% are strangers - 93% of victims know their abuser. People who abuse children look and act just like everyone else. Those who sexually abuse children are drawn to settings where they can gain easy access to children, such as sports leagues, faith centers, clubs and schools.

How Does Abuse Happen?: Children are vulnerable, the abuser-is powerful; without a comprehensive strategy against abuse, we are taking a needless risk that harm may be done to our children or our workers with children. Strategies must be supported by the entire congregation and, applied to each worker involved in children's ministries. We need to think carefully about the safety of any one-adult/one--child situations. Look for group situations where possible. Set an example by personally avoiding one-adult/one-child situations with children other than your own.

Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse: Many victims are created, including the child, the congregation the child's family, and often the family of the abuser. Of foremost importance is the child who has been harmed; he or she must be cared for. The congregation's wounds may continue well beyond litigation - that doesn't provide healing among the members. Litigation can go on for two or more years. Financial consequences are somewhere around \$750,000 if innocent/at least \$1-2 million if proven guilty. No congregation can afford, financially, ethically, or morally, to fail to implement strategies for the reduction and prevention of child sexual abuse.

Greater NJ Conference Insurance: All churches are covered because the Conference has a policy, and there is an expectation that every church and its programs, is implementing some type of policies and procedures. As is true with most situations, the extent of coverage varies, depending on what the local church has done to proactively prevent abuse from happening.

Minimizing Opportunity for Abuse: If you eliminate or reduce one-adult/one-child situations, you'll dramatically lower the risk of sexual abuse for your child. Expect programs to perform careful screening and background checks on all persons working with children. Youth-serving organizations should have policies in place for dealing with suspicious situations and reports of abuse. Furthermore, these organizations should regularly train their staff to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse - *What should be reported?*

Every individual in New Jersey, including clergy is required to report child abuse to the authorities if there is a strong reason to believe that it is occurring. If you believe a child has been abused or neglected, you have a legal responsibility to report it. The Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) of New Jersey is required by law to investigate reports of child abuse and neglect. (<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dyfs/>)

DYFS is New Jersey's child protection/child welfare agency. It is their responsibility for investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect and if necessary, arranges for the child's protection and the family's treatment.

In addition, DYFS operates a 24-hour hotline to receive reports of suspected child abuse and neglect during evenings, weekends and holidays. This Office of Child Abuse Control (OCAC) is linked with a statewide network of Special Response Units who respond to emergency reports. .

IMPORTANT REPORTING PROCEDURES IN THE CASE OF AN INCIDENT

All complaints and allegations of child abuse OCCURING WITHIN ACTIVITIES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION WHILE THEY ARE AT CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH will be reported to the DYFS Abuse Hotline as a citizen of New Jersey.

Follow this procedure in response to a child's complaint or allegations of child abuse occurring inside the church during your organization's program or activity:

1. Remove child to safe place. The safety of the victim must be the primary concern.
2. Do not confront the alleged abuser with anger and hostility - treat with dignity but immediately remove from further involvement.
3. Notify Authorities and document situation. Follow the steps below.
 - a. Call DYFS hotline: 1-877 NJ. ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) - They will instruct you of the steps you should follow for the specific situation. For sexual abuse cases, DYFS will contact a local center and dispatch a trained interviewer to interview the child.
 - b. Call police: 911 (only if child is in immediate danger)
 - c. Call the Pastor of CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 201-317-5718
4. Keep a written record of all steps taken in response to the allegation.

I HAVE READ THIS POLICY AND ADDENDUM. I AGREE TO ADHERE TO THIS SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY AND WILL PROVIDE REQUIRED INFORMATION TO CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AS NOTED ABOVE

<u>Karen DeMarco (Pres.)</u> (PRINTED NAME)	<u>Karen DeMarco</u> (SIGNATURE)	<u>2/11/21</u> (DATE)
<u>Carmin DeMarco (V.P.)</u> (PRINTED NAME)	<u>Carmin DeMarco</u> (SIGNATURE)	<u>2/11/21</u> (DATE)

The above named persons are representatives of

The Food Brigade Inc.
(NAME OF GROUP/ORGANIZATION USING CALVARY UMC)